

ABSTRACT

Recombinant negative-strand viral RNA templates are described which may be used with purified RNA-directed RNA polymerase complex to express heterologous gene products in appropriate host cells and/or to rescue the heterologous gene in virus particles. The RNA templates are prepared by transcription of appropriate DNA sequences with a DNA-directed RNA polymerase. The resulting RNA templates are of the negative-polarity and contain appropriate terminal sequences which enable the viral RNA-synthesizing apparatus to recognize the template. Bicistronic mRNAs can be constructed to permit internal initiation of translation of viral sequences and allow for the expression of foreign protein coding sequences from the regular terminal initiation site, or vice versa.